



PERIYAR VIEWS ON SOCIAL RELIGIOUS TRANSFORMATION IN FACTION AND SOCIAL JUSTICE MODERN SOCIETY

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ABSTRACT

Periyar was known as the Voltaire of South India he was Atheist, Social Reformer, Rationalist, Prolific Writer, Effective Speaker and an Original Thinker. He worked for downtrodden people. He started self-respect movement, Anti-Hindi agitation. He opposed the caste system of India. Periyar was a crusader for social justice. He was born in a wealthy family on 17th September 1879 at Erode in Tamil Nadu State. His father was Venkatappa (Naicker) a rich popular merchant and his mother was China Thayammal. Social justice is the inseparable component of Indian socio-religious reform movement. It is a revolutionary concept that tried to create an equivalent society for all. Indian religious reform movement began their work under the influence of Christian missionaries. Raja Ram Mohan Roy firstly raised the voice against social injustice of Indian society. He raised the issues of Sati (Self-Immolation by a widow) widow remarriage and the Caste system and also tried to uproot these social evils from the Indian society. These evils were worked as a barrier to head the social justice among the Indian society. The influence of Raja Ram Mahon Roy produced many social religious reformers. These reformers also raised the voice against various social evils like caste system, Dowry, Sati, Female Feticide, Girls Education, Child Marriage and lower education quality in India these reformers were joined their hands with British Rulers, to create the Social legislation against these common evils.

KEYWORDS: Atheist, Social Reformer, Rationalist, Prolific Writer, Socio-Religious, Social evils, Indian society.

INTRODUCTION:

In the annals of the Presidency of Madras the period between 1916 and 1922 was important because of the series of events that took place affecting the social and political life of the people. The elections for the provincial councils in late 1926 were significant, for the electoral alliance formed by the Independent group and the Swaraj enabled them to unseat the Justice Party and terminate its six years of diarchic rule. Consequently, the period witnessed the installation of Dr. Subarayans Independent Ministry in the province. Again the preparations for constitutional changes, the effect of which was to change British policies in the entire Indian sub-continent resulted in agitated activity among the politicians.

Periyar had no specific plans as Justice Party was achieved and Periyar was in the congress that left the Tamil Nadu Congress in 1927. Many of his colleagues, including Rajaji, wanted him back to the Congress fold. Periyar himself had no political ambitions at this stage as he was not for starting a new political party. In 19th century, the British Government was considered as the luckiest era on the Indian soil because the Indian political system was totally disturbed at that time. The weak Mughal emperor and fights between the Indian kings were created a good atmosphere for British Kingdom. Looking the situation, British had adopted the policy to raise their emperor boundaries.

With their emperor, they were spread their culture, rituals and religion within the country with the help of British rulers, numbers of Christian missionaries entered and spread out Christianity. Number of Indian people had adopted the Christian rules and regulation and converted them into Christianity. It was extremely affected the Indian Cultures, religion and traditions. Due to this, few Indian were raised their voice against the British Government oppressive rule. They knew that the British were destroyed the Indian culture and religion.

SOCIO RELIGIOUS REFORM MOVEMENT:

He instigated several campaigns against the abolition of Sati, child marriage, female infanticide, caste system, women equality, girl's education etc. He was raised his voice against the custom of Sati from his family but, unfortunately he could not save his sister-in-law from the self-immolation. He himself feels extremely hurt and drafted an act to abolish sati with the help of British Government. The Governor General of Bengal Lord William Bentinck was passed an act of Bengal Sati Regulation Act in 1829. This law had declared Sati a punishable offence. Raja Ram Roy also did lots of effort to maintain the Muslim and Hindu unity. Among these social reform movements, another well-known reformer raised his voice. He was also belonging to the state of Bengal. Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar born in a poor Brahmin family he was a great scholar and reformer. He had great sympathy for the poor and oppressed class of the society. He was highly supporter of women education and widow remarriage.

He established the Bethune School; it was the first Indian school for girls. The numerous schools were opened for the girl's education by his efforts. He openly supported the widow remarriage. Just because of his endeavour the widow remarriage Act was passed. He also spoke vehemently against child marriage and polygamy. Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar pledged that he would allow his daughters

to study and married all his daughters after the age of. He also promised that if any of his daughters was widow or they wanted to get remarried, he would be allowed them to do so he was also against the prevalent custom of polygamy.

PRINCIPLE OF CLASS SYSTEM:

The beginning of the class system in South Asia, Aryans starting vital invaded in South Asia and introduced the caste system as earnings of overprotective the confined populations. Early history hasty written confirmation concerning the caste coordination appears in the Vedas, Sanskrit-language texts from as untimely as 1500 BCE, which form the basis of Hindu scripture. The Rig Vedic, introductory 1700-1100 BCE, occasionally mentions caste distinction and indicates that social mobility was frequent. The Bhagavad Gita conversely, commencing 200 BCE-200 CE, emphasizes the significance of caste. In accumulation, the "Law of Manu" or Manusmriti (Manudharma) since the identical epoch defines the rights and duties of the four different caste or Varnas (Varnashrama-dharma). Therefore it seems that the Hindu caste structure began to set a little between 1000 and 200 BCE.

In communal divisions existed from the Sangam mature losing to the nearby day. These divisions are measured kulam or they were social divisions based on avocations to which the dissimilar groups of people were fond of and as such, they may be conceived as geological divisions moderately in common ones. The liberated social association existed between these divisions and they became endogamous units through the blending of the Sanskrit ethnicity and the varnashrama-dharma.

There were followed four types of caste system

- Brahmins (Priests and Scholars)
- Kshatriyas (Political rulers and Soldiers)
- Vaishyas (Merchants)
- Sudras (Labourers, Peasants, and Servants)

Indicated on the name boards to they maintain beside Brahmins and solitary served Brahmins. He prearranged agitations at some stage in Tamil Nadu for the confiscation of the words "intended for the Brahmins" and "with the Brahmins" from the name boards of hotels. Periyar draw the concentration of the general people and mainly the philanthropists to this preparation in the production of feeding the Brahmins and non-Brahmins individually.

UNTOUCHABILITY:

Things like untouchability, unsuitability, not talking, not coming close has not left anyone in our country. Not only is it customary for a person to say that one below him [in the caste hierarchy] is untouchable and useable, and the same person is untouchable and useable to one above him, but all these people taken together are untouchable and useable, and unapproachable to the Europeans,

which is the caste that rules us. In this manner, to talk of eradicating untouchability is shameful. It is not only about the emancipation of the Panchamas, it is not only about removing their difficulties, but it is about removing the disgrace and atrocities inside each one of us: the notion of untouchability during the repressive rule of British, another disorder was spread in Indian society therefore social evils.

Social evil mean that issues which negatively affects the member of the society. Sati, untouchability, dowry, child marriage were the major social evils at that time. These evils were ruin the Indian Culture and created barricade to obtain social justice. (Social justice means any person cannot discriminate on the ground of opportunities and privileges level). So our social reformers and religious leaders took upon themselves the responsibility of reforming the society by awakening the people and uproot the evils of society. When they say that some people should not walk in the streets and that some people should not be seen, we must think of what these people feel in their hearts and on what basis they say such things. People of other religions like Muslims, Christians and Parsis can walk in the streets.

A pig, dog, cat, rat can walk in the street; these can be seen while eating or at other times. The Hindu Tamil Ian who was born and brought up in Tamil Nadu, and who has made Tamil Nadu his own for thousands of years, is told by another: 'You should not walk in the streets, don't come in front of me.' How can a human being digest this? This is the philosophy of the Vaikom Satyagraha and the Gurukulam struggle. Only the sorrow of the Untouchables is the sorrow of the non-Brahmins who form 97% of the population. Only by the abolition of the untouchability, the non-Brahmins can be saved or redeemed.

COMMUNAL REPRESENTATION:

More than the communal representation for Non-Brahmins, the communal representation for Untouchables is very important we will say this even from the Gopuram of the temples. They have not attained development in education, or employment, or in other streams of public life in proportion to their population in the society. As a result of this, these People who are one-fifth of the nation forget the welfare of the nation; in search of the Government's grace, they go and fall into another religion and sprout as our enemies. The selfish do not worry about this. It is not just to say that it is betrayal of the nation.

If the responsible public ignores it I will say that it is a greater sin. If this society had been given communal representation at least some 25 years ago, will we have this kind of difference of opinion, lack of unity, British tyranny and Brahmin cruelty in our country even today? The man who should not walk in the street, the man who should not be seen, the man who should not know his own religion, the man who should not see his own god: can such categories exist in India? Everyone with a social outlook must think about this. They need to implement this in the state conference and bring it into force because it is the duty of the patriots.

GENESIS OF THE SELF RESPECT MOVEMENT:

Encouraged Periyar to take up with missionary zeal a cause that was not easy to promote even among those who needed it most is generally known. But what sustained his interest is a mystery. It was the steadfast devotion to the cause. That was the greatness of Periyar which made him a Periyar "a great man," a Tantai "father" and a Thalaivar "leader." Periyar was born and brought up in an extremely orthodox household.

In his early boyhood, he was exposed to a rigid orthodox way of life strictly governed by traditional prescriptions and scrupulously attached to conventional ritual-ridden activities. Periyar, recalling his boyhood remarked that "the Hindu orthodoxy practiced by his ancestors and the theological discourses perennially conducted in his house turned him to be an agnostic." Small incidents of caste discrimination treatment experienced while he was yet a schoolchild seemed to have made a lasting impression so derogatory to his sense of "self-respect" as to drive him to be a determined speaker after an egalitarian society.

Giving his own reason for becoming a staunch opponent to religious practices, Periyar had observed that in every circumstance and in every manner he was different from his "association and surrounding" and never became a victim to his surrounding in any field. He stated that the general belief that association and environment made a person's life, ideals and methods, which was also found true in experience, had been disproved in his case.

WOMEN'S RIGHTS:

Periyar was a champion of women's rights. In several Self-Respect Conferences, which he organized in Periyar advocated man-woman equality, and equal property rights for women. Among other things, he encouraged and supported inter-caste marriages and widow-remarriages. Periyar popularized Self-Respect Marriages by mutual consent, which was conducted without any Brahmin priest or religious ritual. Periyar also supported the abolition of the Devadasi system under which young girls were attached to Hindu temples as sex workers. Periyar described this system as a disgrace to Hindu religion.

Periyar's speeches and articles relating to women's rights have been published in the form of a book titled Periyar on Women's Rights. In his various speeches and

articles contained in this book, Periyar has supported women's education, property rights for women, Self-Respect Marriages, birth control and widow remarriages. Periyar has also expressed his views on love, chastity and "prostitution". By making parenthood rather than motherhood the decisive factor in the nurture and care of human life, Periyar sought to liberate the female body from the oppressive and suffocating realm of eternal fertility.

He and his self respecters encouraged the widespread practice of contraception and entreated women to assume sovereign control over their wombs. Articles appeared regularly in Kudi Arasu, Puratchi and other Self-Respect journals which examined the implications of the practice of birth control for women's freedom. In several women's conferences convened by Self-Respecters, resolutions urging women to secure their reproductive freedom were passed. While speaking at Self-Respect marriage gatherings, Periyar would counsel women not to make a vocation out of motherhood. Periyar also linked women's reproductive freedom with the question of their sexual and personal autonomy.

In an article on the pioneering work of Marie Stops and her birth control clinic, he argued forcefully that when pregnancy ceases to be a matter of choice but a condition to be endured at all costs, it not only trapped women in loveless marriages, but also prevented them from seeking out other male friendships or leaving a despised husband for one they loved.

THE REVOLUTIONARY SOCIAL REFORMER:

Periyar was convinced that if man developed self respect, he would automatically develop individuality and would refuse to be led by the nose by schemers. One of his most known quotes on Self-Respect was, "we are fit to think of 'self-respect' only when the notion of 'superior' and 'inferior' caste is banished from our land". Periyar did not expect personal or material gain out of this movement. He used to recall in a very casual manner that as a human being, he also was obligated to this duty, as it was the right and freedom to choose this work. Thus, he opted to engage himself in starting and promoting the movement.

Periyar declared that the Self-Respect Movement alone could be the genuine freedom movement, and political freedom would not be fruitful without individual self-respect. He remarked that the so-called 'Indian freedom fighters' were showing disrespect of self-respect, and this was really an irrational philosophy.

CONCLUSION:

The socio-religious reform movements were strive to sustain the social justice in India and also curbing on the social evils and promote women education in the society. These religious movements were very helpful to the British Empire for enacting the various laws on Sati, widow remarriage and fixing the minimum age of marriages. These movements were raised the voice for women education. As a result of this struggle diverse educational institutions had been opened at that time and later on these institutions were transformed into universities. The voice against the untouchability was the major contribution for drafting the Indian constitution. At last these social reform movements were fetched a peace and union among Hindu, Muslim and Sikh community and motivate them to achieve the social justice in the society.

Periyar was not only a man of words but also a man of deeds. He spoke and wrote many a time about honesty, integrity, propriety and a host of other virtues. The greatness of Periyar was that he never stopped with preaching but also practised what he preached. Moreover, he expected his followers to hold strictly to his principles. Those who move away from him would cease to be his followers. His contributions to the mental emancipation were immense He thought that his movement should continue even after him for which he made some arrangements. He opines that it is not enough that youth have more interest and sacrifice. They should also have the analytic power to distinguish between good and bad or else they will become a prey in the hands of selfish people. To achieve this he created selfless volunteers to propagate humanist rationalism.

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